



News From

Maggie Brooks

Monroe County Executive

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BROOKS' FINAL BUDGET HONORS 12 YEAR COMMITMENT TO NOT RAISE TAXES

2016 Budget Closes \$22 Million Mandate-Fueled Gap; Cuts Total Spending by \$5 Million; Provides Property Tax Rebates; Once Again Cuts Structural Deficit

Monroe County Executive **Maggie Brooks** tonight presented her final County Budget to the County Legislature, honoring her 12 year commitment to deliver property tax stability and a fiscally responsible County government that does more with less while responsibly funding vital quality of life services. The proposed 2016 Budget holds the property tax rate flat for the 12th straight year, cuts overall spending by \$5 million, once again reduces the County's structural deficit and ensures County taxpayers receive a Tax Rebate Check.

*"When I took office in 2004, I promised this community that I would not raise the property tax rate. Some pundits and opponents said it couldn't be done, but I couldn't be more proud to stand here tonight presenting my 12th and final budget that honors the promise I made 12 years ago," said **Brooks**. "Closing a \$22 million gap was no easy task and we certainly made some difficult choices, but thanks to our commitment to a smaller, smarter, and more efficient County government, the 2016 Budget again protects the only special interest group that matters: the local taxpayer."*

Balanced Budget Thanks to a Top-Down Dedication to Fiscal Responsibility

It comes as no surprise that the single largest portion of Monroe County's 2016 Budget is mandates, which account for a staggering 85% of the County's total spending. Thanks to **Brooks'** top-down commitment to effectively manage limited resources, the 2016 Budget again streamlines operations and eliminates duplication of services to reduce the size and cost of County government.

*"The greatest challenge facing County finances is the crushing weight of unfunded mandates, which account for 85% of our billion dollar budget," said **Brooks**. "Some say that mandates are like the weather—everyone complains about them, but no one does anything about it. Well, that's not the case in Monroe County. Thanks to the hard work of our staff, we have administered our mandated programs more efficiently, reducing mandated expenses by \$5 million."*

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At **Brooks'** direction, County Departments and Offices set aggressive budget targets to do more with less. Through an array of cost avoidance measures, the County was able to use a diversified approach to bring the 2016 Budget into balance and protect taxpayers.

These fiscally-responsible measures include: the continued responsible sale of property tax liens for a total of approximately \$9.5 million; internal efficiencies and streamlining of services for a savings of approximately \$3.4 million; growth in real estate valuations for a total of \$5.2 million; use of \$1.6 million from the Fund Balance; sale of the Edwards Building for approximately \$600,000; and increases in scheduled PILOT payments for a total of approximately \$300,000.

Complies with Taxpayer Protection Act and New York State Tax Cap

Although the County continues to control only 15% of its budget on the local level, the 2016 Budget again holds non-mandated spending below the rate of inflation. Non-mandated spending is held to an increase of just 0.2% for 2016, which puts the 2016 Budget in full compliance with the Taxpayer Protection Act.

The Act, which was proposed by **Brooks** and passed by the County Legislature in 2007, serves as a first-of-its-kind local property tax cap by requiring annual increases in discretionary spending to be no greater than the rate of inflation. The Budget also complies with the New York State Property Tax Cap and will ensure that local taxpayers are eligible for a 2016 property tax rebate under the New York State Property Tax Freeze Credit Program.

No Reductions to Vital Quality-of-Life Services

Under **Brooks'** leadership, Monroe County has been recognized as one of the best places in the country to live, work, and raise a family by many nationally-recognized publications. The 2016 Monroe County Budget responsibly maintains the services that are vital to maintaining our community's high quality of life, including in the areas of parks, public safety, and transportation infrastructure.

*"While the County can't control mandated costs that result in a budget deficit each and every year, we can make good decisions when spending the dollars we do control," said **Brooks**. "That was my promise to taxpayers in 2004 and that is the practice of this administration 12 years later."*

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